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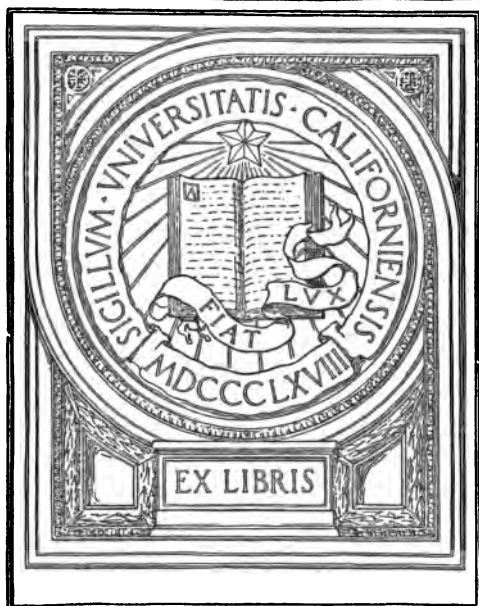
MEMORIES by Alma Newton

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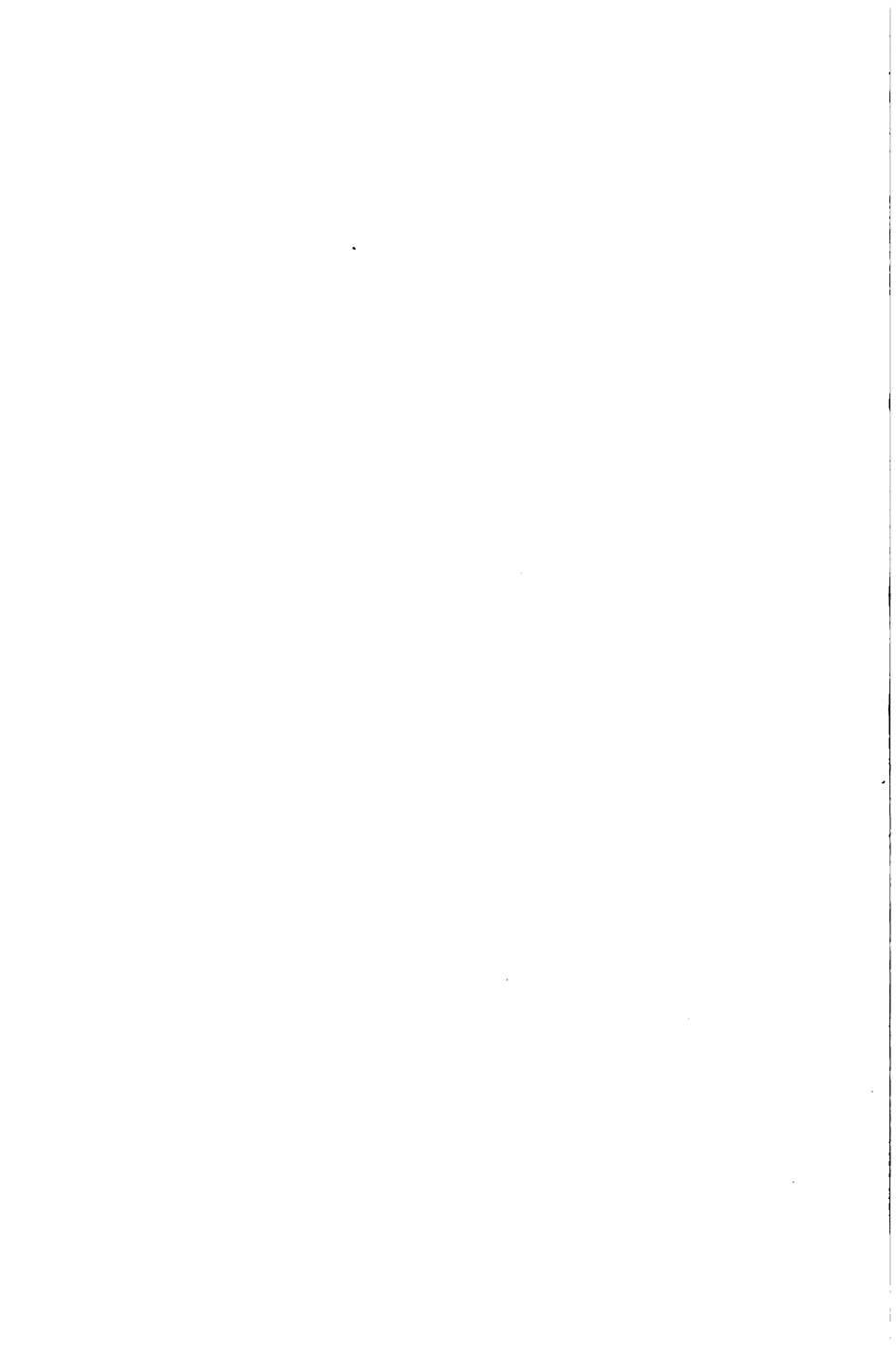
GIFT OF
A. F. Morrison



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MEMORIES



MEMORIES

By
ALMA NEWTON

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



NEW YORK
DUFFIELD AND COMPANY
1917

TO VIBU
AIRBORNE

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GIFT OF

A. F. Morrison

INTRODUCTION

I have always believed that the old-fashioned habit of keeping a diary was prompted more by the individual's love of romance and color than by any petty conceit or exaggerated ego; for is not a diary often composed of events in the lives of others rather than that of the writer, and may it not possess one incomparable charm, naturalness? There being no attempt toward the technical and studied, the diary is just a simple, unaffected record of experiences written right out from the heart, with the abandonment of a musician who dares to interpret in his own way, thrusting aside conventional rules—retaining only certain fundamental principles upon which the work is built; forgetting the objective sense of things; lost in the infinite beauties of the subjective mind, that realm of

INTRODUCTION

inspiration and mystic depth which annihilates all petty conceptions, details and minor emotions.

It is my desire to write in this way, with daring, naturalness and simplicity—directly to the heart of my readers with only one burden upon my soul: the realization that the effort can only be that of a poor scribe. . . . I now introduce myself,—Zarah Kreeshna.

FIRST MEMORY

The humility of a great love is ever amazing.

MAETERLINCK.

MEMORIES

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CHAPTER ONE

It was on Long Island that I met Louis Renaud in a large, over-crowded hotel. He seemed quite aloof and apart from the guests; he appeared to be entirely engaged with the real things of life. He was tall, dark, impressive—beautiful, if one might apply that word to a man, in its artistic sense; a strange combination of soul, mind and body. There was something occult about him, with just enough boyishness to make him fascinating. The minute I saw him I cared for him; when I talked with him I cared more; when I heard him playing his violin I loved him, for then I knew the inner man and the inner man was *beautiful*.

He did not specialize in his music, for he

was a physician of about four and thirty. . . .

I gave him my love freely, naturally, like a child placing a basket of fresh flowers in his hand and then standing back bewildered, confounded, when no recognition was received—no thanks for my pretty gift. Like a child I often ~~stole up to him~~ on the long board walk and ~~peeped into this mental basket of nature's loveliness, thinking, waiting~~ for the least sign—a smile, a word of thanks or gracious appreciation; but never a smile and never one word of encouragement. . . .

The months wore on, and soon it was time to return to the busy city where I planned little conventional meetings. I asked him to dine, to tea. He came sometimes, oftener declined. I was puzzled, curious, bewildered. Did he love someone else? Was he engaged or was he merely busy? Surely he guessed my love—surely it would be returned.

He must realize our kinship—the relationship of souls.

But time passed and there was no change. There were months of suspense—weary days and sleepless nights until one morning I awakened to find myself a ghastly creature,

void of color or life. Listlessly I telephoned to my physician. I remember a few words to him—"Come to me," I said, "it is Zarah"—that is all I can recall. My next remembrance was in the afternoon when I awakened to find a nurse, and a friend bending over me and the friend saying: "I shall tell him—he must know—it is killing her!"

A few hours passed when I was again awakened by voices in the next room. I crept to the door and listened. I heard these words: "I am sorry; it is unfortunate. I admire Zarah, but I do not love her. I am engaged to——" Suddenly there was darkness, a sharp pain in my heart and then a dropping, dropping—a heavy thud—another pain, and someone lifting me from the floor—two strong arms, *his* arms, and then the nurse, my friend, a hypodermic, a last look at my beloved as he quietly left the room. Then—annihilation—forgetfulness—*nothingness*.

I shall spare my reader a rehearsal of the dreadful days that followed—days of longing, waiting, tears, futile prayers, monotony—an occasional message from Louis, some

formal thought, flowers or a book and nothing more. Yet *I still cared*. Was it weakness or destiny? Was it hypnotism or Karma?

One thing was certain, the problem had to be faced philosophically. This required a prosaic system of dieting, sleep and exercise to offset a permanent breakdown, eliminating all stimulants, leaving only a dull routine and many leaden hours to be lived through. There were so many hours to be lived—hours where all resources had been exhausted; the body too tired for further effort—hours that evolved into an eternity; hours that crawled by in which there was nothing to do.

Human beings were to be found, of course, but who among them could understand? And does not reserve often force us into silence, leaving us only the song from the Garden of Allah, so potent, so real, which begins "Only God and I know what is in my heart."

Finally the mind reaches out for some great wholesome philosophy, perhaps for the words of Emerson: "Give me health for a day and I will make the pomp of emperors insignificant"—or Browning's: "All's right

with the world,"—or just a little sentence of one's own: "It might be worse, it might be worse"—until the soul, all shrouded in grief, suddenly raises its arms in prayer and staggers up a mountain path, looking past dim shadows into the faces of bright fairies that beckon and call to distant shepherd boys who leave the remnant of a song or gypsy queens their charms—a wild mixture of nature, romance and song; yet hearing still the call of the blood, taunted by the realization that love is the only force which brings happiness to "those strange people" whom Max Muller "so loved since childhood."

I speak not of the maudlin sentiment or the sordid passion, so often called love. . . . I speak of the love that Buddha called Law; Confucius, Revelation; and the Nazarene, God. . . .

CHAPTER TWO

LOUIS knew that I cared. And yet he seemed rather to regard my interest in him as a bond—a tie that would make me his loyal and useful friend. Often he dashed up the stairs to my studio, consumed with enthusiasm, throwing himself upon the divan, hastily lighting a cigarette and beginning the endless eulogy of another woman.

I continued my painting, glad that the canvas was between us so that my face was hidden from view, aimlessly painting a woman's lips blue, her eyes staring into space, in unconscious correspondence to the mental vision of myself. The background of my painting was made gray—another unconscious revelation of days that were gray and dim, when work had been impossible—when the evening descended upon mental ashes, the

effort to follow out a certain system for the day futile—the physical self too numbed by pain. There were other days of keen grief and suffering of that exalted, emotional kind where fond hopes and spiritual reminiscences crowd over the mind in splendid dreams, with visions of renunciation and consecration—of looking at life from the mountain top forgetting that a reaction must follow, the human side to assert itself again in mute suffering, too tired to cry out, too hopeless for longing, too wise for futile dreams. . . .

The woman of whom he spoke so continuously was Stella Graham; he described her as possessing rare beauty and a versatile nature, standing out from other women in bold relief like an exquisite miniature among commonplace bric-à-brac. She was as beautiful as Venus in the material sense, he said, and yet her face was as angelic as a Madonna. He described her as dressing in simple gowns, conspicuous in their absence of trimming and jewelry. She wore her hair simply coiled upon her white neck. There was a singularly pensive smile hovering about her lips, expressing wistfulness; something infinitely

white, gentle, angelic . . . her nature vibrating with asceticism and high idealism. Again he described her—gowned in a most regal way, in warm colors, sensuous, appealing, irresistibly human,—palpitating with red blood and vivid enthusiasm. He called her Madonna and I called her Venus; quite gradually I began to think of her as Venus and the Madonna, for she seemed to possess a dual personality, two distinct natures in direct conflict with each other.

I tried to show no emotion when he told me that Stella Graham was ill and alone in the city and that he wished me to go to her. My feelings were indescribable! That he should ask something he realized must unnerve me; to go to the woman he loved. All kinds of emotions welled up in my soul; resentment, indignation and bitterness; but lastly pride, that indefinable something which causes certain women to dare anything.

“I will go to her to-morrow,” I said indifferently, in an apathetic voice.

He left me alone with my thoughts, only thanking me formally in a way which either showed complete indifference or lack of real-

ization that I still cared for him. Or was it merely masculine cruelty? He seemed almost to enjoy the situation!

All that night through I fought conflicting emotions—jealousy, bitterness, indignation.

One thing was certain. If she were so seriously ill, so alone, there was no time to be lost, a decision must be reached. At dawn I had determined to go to her. I could only think of the word “her,” yet I quite knew her name. But it’s a way with women, I believe, when thinking of the *other woman*.

Another realization came upon me. I was *curious to see what she was like*. How truly feminine that was! I wondered if she was really so pretty, so versatile, so unique;—*well, I would see. . . .*

After an hour’s walk through the park, in an effort to control my emotion, I reached her door. There was no bell. It was a strange, old-fashioned place. I knocked twice. There was no sound. Again and again, after waiting breathlessly for minutes that seemed hours, the door opened and I found myself staring into the tense, white

face of the man I loved—Louis, the physician.

Quietly I entered the room and my eye caught sight of an old-fashioned, four-poster bed, a table, a chair and a few handsome Persian rugs. The clock was striking dismally the hour of noon.

“Where is she?” I said mechanically. Turning my head toward the window I caught the shadow of a figure coming toward me, as though bewildered, walking in a dream. She looked so pathetic, so young, so helpless. I reached out my hand to steady her as she tottered toward me, and without a word she walked right into my arms like a tired child, charming me by so simple a demonstration; calling out the protective instinct, which, when awakened in some women, responds with warmth and understanding.

In just this one minute she had won me. She owned me.

I forgot myself, my loving, my lover—I only thought of this helpless child in my arms.

And how beautiful she was! Even more exquisite than he had pictured her. A mar-

velous combination of child and woman, animal and spirit; the embodiment of sensuous charm and spiritual loveliness—something to be loved and studied, for her soul was like a harp, all full of possibilities, ready to break into beautiful chords. . . .

CHAPTER THREE

THE day wore on, and I finally persuaded Stella to be quiet, to lie down. She was suffering from a nervous breakdown, in which there was a touch of typhoid, and her suffering and restlessness were pathetic.

A storm raged without as night came on. The shutters creaked, the candle light fluttered in the darkness, while the wind whistled in weird strains under the door. Stella moaned and tossed in delirium; the heavy odor of herbs boiling in the kettle stifled the air. Louis walked up and down heavily—the floor creaked—the lightning flashed, symbolic of ruthless, elemental forces raging without—the harsh voice of accompanying thunder echoed in the distance; rain drops fell upon the tin roof as though in a great reaction of pain. At last there was *silence*, save for the

faint breathing of Stella, and a whisper from Louis:

“Thank God that has passed—she is better now!”

I looked up at him fixedly, but he did not see me—did not see that I was tired and weary as a result of the long watch and persistent care. I just continued to stare aimlessly—he looking into the dying embers of things—I looking into the heart of a man obsessed by love for another woman.

The candle went out, a string on an old harp snapped, the clock solemnly struck the hour of three. Dawn had come, bringing thoughts of courage and renunciation.

Stella recovered gradually. Was I glad? I had learned to love her, yet strange, weird fancies flitted through my mind. How splendid it would be if she no longer existed—then he would turn to me for comfort, and I would be happy just to be near him, even realizing that his thoughts were of another. Was I lacking in pride? Was I weak, or very strong? Weak in an apparent humbleness of spirit, strong in my steadfast love? I did not know. I only knew that time and indiffer-

ence had produced no change—that I was only a poor, suffering animal obsessed by one idea, my love and need of him.

How difficult it is to put aside our dreams that have been visualized so concretely. Just when we believe that we have crushed the memory of an individual, environment faces us with an atmosphere filled with sweet and pathetic dreams.

I had kept a rosary hanging over his picture. I destroyed that picture and the rosary. How strange, how remote was my room! The personality was so changed. Marked books, pressed flowers and letters—they, too, had gone! Could I live in that room again? I could not. It would stifle me. I could not bear the oppression—I would go elsewhere. I would run away. Such is a *woman's* way. . . .

When Stella was stronger we had many long, interesting walks together; I was fascinated by her new and sudden moods. Subtle, artistic, graceful—never inconsistent or bad humored; changing from one to another like the moods of a wonderful symphony resulting in a perfect whole. How restful and

sympathetic it made her; she responded to everything. She represented a trinity in the sense of a perfect development of soul, mind and body.

There was a minor strain through her nature, a genuine sadness not of personal discontent, but compassion for all suffering, and a deep understanding of humanity.

Her mind seemed a thousand years old in the depth of its wisdom; her soul as though she had lived with the immortals; her body young and beautiful—a combination I had never known before. It was as though she had lived before, lived in many forms from the heights of idealism befitting a priestess of some eastern temple to a Cleopatra type of beauty and desire, down through the ages, and now placed in so strange a setting—a setting too new, too modern. It was not the proper environment. . . .

I revelled in flights of fancy in an effort to diagnose this very unique character, Stella Graham.

Louis was right in calling her Madonna. In our walks she spoke of children; love of them was a passion with her, ever present,

over-mastering. This greatly interested me, and I tried to make her talk freely and confidently.

"Sometimes," she said, "I am awakened at dawn by the indistinct memory of little children's voices chanting in a minor key, chanting of the dignity of their mission in life, the living expression of human love. As I see them, in my reverie, they are enveloped in exquisite pastel shades from the faintest blue to rose pink and pale lavender. From these colors spring a chord, a minor chord of almost happy sadness, for the sadness is more a deep longing than the common form of sadness—the longing for things supreme, the longing for the consummation of all love into the final call of Nirvana, where only purity and beauty dwell.

"Sometimes these little ones seem to take pity upon my longing, and in my dreams they draw near and, with their rose-petaled hands, smooth my hair and kiss my lips, dropping wild-flowers and angels'-wings at my feet.

"This may sound fantastic to you," she continued, "but to me it is very real, believing as I do in the nearness of Paradise. May

it not be that little spirit children hover very closely around us bringing peace and benediction?

“For there is no death, no absolute annihilation—there is only *transition*. And I wonder if those of us who have suffered and lost do not unconsciously attract the souls in the world of Paradise so that we may be comforted? Many of us think of that other life as being far away, in the distance, when in reality it is near—in, about, around us—*everywhere*. True, we cannot always touch and see it with our physical hands and eyes; but we know that the greatest Forces are the silent ones; electricity is silent, yet how near, how potent, how marvelous! How can we doubt? Does not modern science go hand in hand with occultism—proving, demonstrating, materializing, the so-called supernatural Forces—making us realize that the greatest wisdom was uttered by the Nazarene when He said. ‘Because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.’

“Think of the subtlety of the universe, the constant, penetrating law of vibration!

Every sound is registered somewhere. Always there is a great chorus of Subjective sound, for everything has its echo just as everything has its complement, only our physical or objective ears hear not.

“Knowing this to be true, I can quite explain many complex and elusive things to myself through the laws of vibration and gravity. For instance, I feel, when I long and think of little children, that a vibration from these thoughts penetrates into the heart of Paradise itself, the law of gravity acting as a pilot, bringing these little souls through the dense clouds of the ether down to earth, to remain as *willing captives of thought*.”

She continued talking, her face radiant with emotion. Now and then the voice dropped into a plaintive, appealing note until I could feel her rapture. She had a way of speaking as though addressing an audience, earnest and dramatic, yet in low, measured tones. Now and then I would step forward in our walk to clear the path, catching a glimpse of her face and the simple white gown she wore. I could not resist contrasting this with the one worn the evening before, a vivid,

sensuous gown, displaying her wonderful shoulders and white arms with daring abandonment. In all truth she was a woman with two distinct personalities, an interesting psychological study. After many minutes of fear and hesitation I ventured to tell her of her dual nature. I feared it might even antagonize her. Instead, she answered me quite simply and pleasantly.

“I have heard that before, but from people who do not think. I am not complex, elusive, subtle. I am simple, natural, feminine! I embody the two instincts normal to woman—the love for a mate and the love for a child. They are very different loves but they harmonize and blend just as do the different notes of a chord. Most of the women you know in the conventional world are void of the maternal instinct; therefore, when you meet a woman in whom it is highly developed you immediately begin to look for an abnormal explanation—when the explanation is so simple and plain. The Venus side that you see is the mere *woman*. The spiritual side of my nature, which Louis sees, is the Mother in me.”

She threw out her hands dramatically. I saw her face lighting in a more mental expression, and I pressed my questions further, hoping that she would talk unreservedly.

"But," I continued, "you have so *many* moods. How do you explain them?"

This I said with a tinge of sarcasm. She answered me quickly.

"Everything normal in nature is moody. A sweeping statement, but nevertheless true. The seasons are moody, the sky is moody; the moon, the sun, color, light, sound—the *universe!* There is a constant action and reaction in everything. There is an artistic necessity and beauty in moods. We must be versatile and negative enough to catch the melodies from the beautiful in people as well as things.

"We must be responsive.

"We must be moody, to respond and express the Forces about us—thus becoming graceful, and complete. I should like to be more full of moods than I am, strange though it may sound. I long to feel that I am an instrument registering everything good and

bad so that I may have the opportunity of overcoming the bad; the privilege of developing the good. If I could create a virtue in character, as well as in art, I would create *Versatility*, for all nature vibrates with sudden change, glorious and everlasting.

“Much more I might say to you, but you would misconstrue my frankness for conceit, my individualism for egotism. I shall say no more. . . .”

We retraced our steps, going back to her home. In the distance I could hear the church bells and chimes ringing out from the village. It was Sunday. The peace of the woods was exquisite, the perfume of the newly-cut grass was about us; the stillness irresistible.

It was interesting to watch her as she unconsciously fell into the mood of the day—gentle and serene, in harmony—always in tune with the dominant note—for *Stella listened and heard. . . .*

CHAPTER FOUR

THE realization had come to me that Louis's love was well placed and yet I still loved him and wondered how the days were to be lived.

It was Sunday again—the dawn had come like a great message of death, full of forebodings and gloomy realities. Something hovered near, some ugly phantom with long black wings of despair, flapping its unearthly messages into the free air—polluting the atmosphere with waves of thought which struck upon the air like the discordant tones of a badly strung guitar—tones doubly repellent, because of the realization that those very tones might have been beautiful had the instrument been just a little more in tune;—or that the phantom might have been fashioned with bright wings of joy and glad tidings.

It is this *nearness* to perfection that tortures, not its utter absence. . . .

In this nearness to happiness we are bewildered by combined hope and fear, mentally holding to a curfew bell which swings us out into vast spaces of suspense; clasping with a hand the one instrument of contact, being thrust out far beyond the range of hope; at the last to be thrown down to earth defeated and ashamed; where only the earth is left us, which we are taught to think of as our Mother. . . . But at this moment of overwhelming desire, what normal person could think of the cold earth as a mother? The desire is to run away from its serene presence of negative consolation. Our tired hearts are longing for an almost fierce understanding, the kind that wraps its arms about us ruggedly and clasps us deep into the heart of things.

I once saw a frightened child running from the green loveliness of a summer garden. I wondered then why she ran from the beautiful foliage that enveloped her, but now I understand. In our first grief the desire is for human understanding. Afterwards we learn

that we must retrace our steps and go back to Nature—back to the primitive source of life for permanent comfort, courage and inspiration.

In a few days my companionship with Stella was ended; she was quite well again and I felt a longing for the country. To be away. To be alone.

The day before I left there was a sailing party and a dance.

It was a glorious morning when we started our sail; the air crisp with the breath of spring, the early roses fragrant in their first blooming, the grass so newly green, the sky radiantly tinted in blue, the water clear with an occasional sail-boat drifting out to sea—waves dashing against the rocks, making a picturesque setting for Stella, whose personality unconsciously blended with these simple manifestations of nature.

She fairly ran down the path to our boat and jumped swiftly, eagerly, into it with the joyousness of a child. We started, the wind taking us south for a few minutes; gradually we went more swiftly, Stella standing near me, eyes shining, hair disheveled and falling

over a red coat, which greatly heightened the color in her cheeks.

We sailed for several hours and in those hours there was very little said. Stella seemed to be lost in the rhythm of the boat as it rode the waves. We fairly sped over the water, the waves dashing against our sturdy craft, the wind blowing the salt water in our faces, bringing a keen exhilaration. I watched Stella. She seemed indifferent to my interest, unconscious of anything personal. She was natural and primitive in her delight of so simple a pleasure. She did not attempt to sustain any conversation. The few questions asked her were scarcely answered. Once or twice I ventured some remark, but her only response was a yes or a no until we got to shore again. Leaving the boat, we walked a few yards up the path, where we stood on a rock overlooking the sea.

"Forgive me, my friend," she said, "forgive me, for I have been a stupid companion this morning. I can never talk when I am near the water. It is like talking when music is heard; I feel that I am talking against rhythm, and rhythm means so much to me—I

am a slave to it. Do you know that I love the ticking of a clock? It is quite necessary to my happiness. Does that seem absurd to you? No matter. I would not remain long in any place where there was not a clock. To me it is the most fascinating thing in a house. Then, too, I have always spent most of my time near the ocean. Another thing necessary to my happiness is music—dance music where I can throw myself into the spirit of things until every nerve in me responds to rhythm, the complement of melody.”

“Yes,” I said, “but do such things really mean so much to you, Stella? Must you have this kind of environment to be happy?”

“Yes,” she answered quickly. “I suppose many people really feel as I do, but they have never thought about it. When I am with people, I always divide them into groups—Objectives and Subjectives—this being the natural tendency of a psychological mind. I——”

Here we were interrupted by Louis, who reminded us of the fact that Stella was to arrange the house for the evening party. And how beautifully she did it. Each touch

was subtle, distinctive, displaying the taste of a keen, artistic temperament. The color scheme of the house, flowers, everything was symbolic of warmth and intensity.

A deep rose and gold predominated in many of the rooms and the flowers were exotic and abundant. Tall candles and shaded lamps threw soft shadows over the guests, while the heavy odor of incense added to this somewhat oriental atmosphere. There was a well-balanced orchestra composed chiefly of violins which played continuously, the melodies mostly Indian and Hawaiian. The orchestra was placed in the corner of a room where it was curtained by rare foliage and orange trees. The perfume of the jessamine and hyacinth mingled with that of the rose; the Venetian glass, the Sheffield silver and richly painted china added to the handsome setting.

I was bewildered by the unfathomable beauty and indefinable charm of Stella that evening. She was gowned in a marvelous creation of white and gold satin cut daringly low, revealing a neck of whiteness and faultless symmetry. The effect of this costume

was accentuated by a single crimson rose. Her hair was simply arranged, showing to advantage the small, proudly-carried head; her face flushed, eyes sparkling; her figure animated by youth and vivid beauty, radiating joyful love of life. She was startling. Certainly the woman I saw now could have nothing in common with the spiritual personality I had talked with the day before as she gazed into the shimmer of the waves, talking to me of transcendental things, looking like a spirit from another sphere, her great dark eyes set in the face of a poet's Madonna. And now, as I sat watching this woman of sensuous beauty—her full, crimson lips, vivid coloring and haughty manner—I began to think of the former personality as a dream-woman, distant and terribly remote.

I wondered how she could find anything in common with her guests, who had sacrificed the lovely things of life. For is not social life a bartering of the real things for the flesh pots? But this world meant happiness for Stella. She seemed a personification of worldliness. I wondered how long she could stand these nights of revelry and the ennui

that would follow. The constant ringing of the telephone—the feeling of being a prisoner—at every turn she would be confronted with some obstacle, a hideous phantom which would beckon to her to come on when she was dying to sleep; to be forced to smile when she wished to be serious; to talk when she longed for silence; to dance when she was tired; all the time longing to be away from it all—from society.

I wondered if she would not begin sooner or later to realize that strange sadness which comes over one in such gatherings—what Wells aptly calls “the psychology of the crowd,” that nervous depression which is worse than the depression of loneliness.

After the party I went to my room, glad that the morrow would take me to my country home away from the futile strain.

As I walked into my room there was a terrible silence; nothing there seemed alive except the telephone.

There is an awful personality and temptation about the telephone. It is like a grotesque demon that taunts with the realization that time and space can be so easily elimi-

nated. It looks so stolid, so emotionless—yet, by lifting the receiver, great waves of emotion and truth can be passed on to the loved one.

There were hours spent in pacing up and down the floor, looking longingly at the telephone, even lifting the receiver and then listlessly putting it down—realizing that further attempts at communication would prove futile. And then—silence and the deep shadows of the night encircled me, still near the telephone I glared mutely into many white pages, never to be read by my beloved, pages bearing the emblem of consecration and love. . . .

I threw myself upon the bed still gowned, and, finally, through exhaustion, I fell asleep with thoughts of him. A vision came to me, as though God Himself felt sorry and sent a messenger to lessen my pain.

It was a simple dream, but *preciously sweet*. In it I was still at the evening party—yet, somehow, a masquerade party, gorgeous but noisy. Through sheer fatigue I had thrown myself down across two gilded chairs (such was the picture in the dream)

and languidly looked up to see handsomely gowned women leaving their boxes.

"It is over at last," I heard myself say pensively, "and he did not come to me."

I looked down at my gown, which, in my dream was an Egyptian robe of Nile green and blue with trimmings of silver. It was a heavy gown and weighed me down. As I dragged myself wearily from my chair and stood in the corner of my box, my head against the post, waiting listlessly, a masked figure appeared all garbed in yellow.

"Is it Louis?" I said, without looking up.

"It is," he said.

I sprang up like a tigress and glared deep into his eyes; I looked steadily, searchingly at him until I realized that it was indeed my beloved.

"Come," he said, "we shall dance the last dance together! . . ."

And then the scene suddenly changed (as it does in dreams), and there were new places, new faces. At last we were alone. It was a room, quite Roman in design. A marble stairway lead to this room; there were tall columns and a divan gorgeously decorated

in purple and gold, and upon that divan my beloved and I sat like two children, two young souls who had suddenly realized the exaltation of love. Yet we chatted innocently, almost lightly, so happy were we. Strange melodies sang in our newly awakened ears—and suddenly I was in his arms! I can now feel the sweet contact of our young arms—and then a great silence—a kiss and just the one word, “dear,” that commonplace word suddenly turned into a medium of holy love . . . in life it would have been “dearest,” at least; in this dream state only a half word, a syllable, a whisper, was necessary; words were barriers rather than revealers of thought, for our hearts had touched there in that beautiful land of dreams! Our minds were asleep, only the soul of things awake, virile and blessed.

The scene changed. We ran about our strange dwelling like little boys and girls. It was that old-fashioned game of “the one” eluding “the other,” and “the one” being always caught by “the other.” A sort of innocent game that nymphs and flower children might have played at the feet of the gods!

'Around us was a hint of spring, woodland music, fresh flowers and the laughter of young dancers in the distance—the deep green grass at our feet—fountains of clear water and the deep, mystic blue of the sky above us.

This I knew—that even if it were only a *dream* that the words of Tagore would cease to be mere words to me but would become solemn realities:

“You came down from your throne and stood at my cottage door. I was singing all alone in a corner, and the melody caught your ear. You came down and stood at my cottage door. Masters are many in your hall, and songs are sung at all hours. But the simple carol of this novice struck at your love. One plaintive little strain mingled with the great music of the world, and, with a flower for a prize, you came down and stopped at my cottage door.”

Life, with its hopeless, apathetic grief had gone—for I knew that our souls had been wedded in that Spiritual life where vast etheric spaces combined in some strange, majestic Force to claim us as their own. . . .

CHAPTER FIVE

It was over; my work was finished; and by four in the afternoon I was packed and ready for the train which took me to my home.

After a weary trip I reached my station, a strange little station in the Adirondacks.

I fairly jumped from the train, as though running away from something—forward to greet my friends, the mountains and the sky. I walked from the station so that I might enjoy the sweet freshness of the night. It was a good three miles to the mountain top where I lived, and I climbed the path along the steep side until I reached a point where I could see my home, where I caught a glimpse of a lantern hung high up on the porch. This, I realized, was the thought of my old servant, Jane, who always prepared some special and thoughtful form of greeting. The lantern was a Japanese one, which, to her mind, was

a thing of rare beauty. It swung to and fro gently, waving me a bright welcome.

I stopped to look at the little cottage with its charm and simple dignity. It was truly a beautiful place in design and situation. Many different kinds of vines and flowers grew on and around the house. I had planted everything that would climb so that *something* would be sure to grow. All of these vines and flowers seemed to have developed into marvelous green things. Now and then some hidden mountain flower of deep crimson or purple peeped through the green, making a bright roof garden of beauty for my beloved little home, for home it was to me, even in its loneliness. At least there was peace and simple comfort and the gentle heavens so near that my head seemed enveloped in the clouds themselves—clouds of white and soft blue. Somehow they nestled about, floating downward, sinking into the deep gold of the west where so often I had watched the sun disappear in the arms of the infinite—majestic and regal in its splendor. The wild geese flying high; a gentle breeze stirring the tall trees into music; that music

so dear to a tired heart—little lambs calling for their mothers, birds answering their mates—*always a call and always an answer*. That was the beauty in it. The great response and rhythm in Nature.

When we cannot have our desires, which, doubtless, have been interrupted by the irregularities of the material world made by man—we can find comfort in returning to Nature, because here we find *the call answered*. . . .

I stood in a reverie upon the threshold of my door, drinking in the loveliness, entranced by the sweetness and silence of the night.

Slowly I entered, finding a huge fire and the odor of rare herbs in the dining-room where a simple but delicious supper was being prepared. I was greeted with a smile of genuine affection by my faithful Jane. Why was it that, in spite of my sorrow, great love and longing for the human touch, I was now tranquil and calm—whereas, in the city I was not only wretched and nervous but overwrought to a dangerous degree? Why was it? Was there a voice of the silence?

Do some of us listen and hear? Was it a question of listening and being *en rapport* with this silence? Was it the law of attraction? Must we become silent so as to register the vibrations of the Invisible, "the echoes of incomprehensible art, the true music of the spheres?"

The next morning I awakened at six and went for a walk over the mountain. I walked for an hour, returning for breakfast upon my porch. There was no morning paper, nothing to bring to mind the trials and sordid discontent of the world of action. Only the bright sunshine, the birds, the flowers, the exquisite view. Thoughts of an impersonal nature, of life—its problems and of the great Cause, the first principle of Being. I was striving to become an initiate into the kingdom of universal love where I might become a stronger woman and more helpful citizen.

I spent many days in long walks and drives, enjoying the magnificent beauty of the mountains and the sky. How well I could understand Oscar Wilde's passion for color! As I gazed into the sky, the deep blue shades blending into soft grey and white, this mighty

stillness and majestic splendor recalled my childhood days when often I would steal away from unsympathetic companions and throw myself down upon the grass, lying for hours gazing into the sky. I could not take my eyes from it, and with this steady contemplation and admiration would come peace, that peace much needed to a weary heart. Is there anything more pathetically sad than the sorrow of little children—when reason is not sufficiently developed to compete with life's problems, when only the heart can ache and the mind remain dormant and unresourceful? Keen suffering, injustices, disappointments, denial of small pleasures, loss of loved ones—the persistent aching void of things—with only the sky above to comfort and bring rest to little hearts that can feel with a tenderness and depth incomparably sad. . . .

How unconsciously do all unaffected and pure exponents of life cling to the elemental manifestations of nature for comfort—the affinity is strong and compelling. Often the hurts of a bleak night are annihilated or changed into less sensitive pain by the sweet

tranquillity and blessing of the out-of-doors. The sky, the sensuous perfume of flowers, the faint throb of the earth bring courage and belief in future compensation.

Byron was right when he said, "Love is a thing to the man apart, 'tis woman's whole existence." Thus it should be, for if there were not women who made love a creed, marriage would cease to be a sacrament, children a benediction and man a hero—for love deep and steadfast inspires all beauty, chivalry and charm. It is the absence of love that destroys idealism, and when idealism is gone the soul is annihilated. Love is a chalice from which we drink the communion wine of exaltation and revelation. It leads us into the realms of the Immortals, where we are encircled with a halo of light which shines through long days and dreary nights, leaving *something beautiful* in our personality. Maeterlinck says: "We live in great moments." The memory of such moments illumine our lives, making of us Road Menders and spiritual guides for less fortunate individuals. . . .

At one time in my life I had regarded love

as hysteria, a mild form of insanity, but something amenable to will. I, too, had laughed at broken hearts, denouncing broken-hearted people as hysterical Neurasthenics—to at last find myself the victim of a thing I had so scornfully regarded in others—to realize that there was love in the world after all, a love so strong, so insidious, that it could wreck an individual; that there was desire which could tear out vitality; disappointment that crushed; jealousy that would poison; love that could cast one down into the lowest depths of degradation or raise one into the clouds where God himself would smile.

So often, too, in trying to forget our love we run forward to greet it in another environment. Such is the inconsistency of human nature; we delude ourselves in thinking that we are escaping a thing which has hurt us when all the time we are pursuing certain land marks, certain longitudinal dimensions, making for ourselves a circle of thought which binds us with its tender memories.

CHAPTER SIX

I recall a conversation with Stella when we were discussing her very interesting self.

"My friend," she said plaintively, "sometimes the wild desire for adventure takes possession of me; a mad desire to lean over a precipice as it were, but not to fall over it—the spirit of a gypsy it is, a passion for the purely unconventional. But just as I stand upon the brink of the precipice a certain indefinable "something" holds me in check. It is tradition, I suppose, a spark created by heredity, something transmitted through the blood of my race. The maternal instinct is strong in me, and brings both danger and conservatism. It causes desire for love in its human form, but also it provides a desire to express this love in the fitting environment. In those few moments of battling against

certain forces—those moments when a woman only wants to be loved with abandonment, when reason is annihilated, when there is neither thought of right or wrong—one ceases to be a woman in the strict sense of the word and is just a human being in love with love.

“Believe me, my friend,” she continued, “the saddest thing in the world is a woman full-blooded and young struggling to be *permanently* good; a woman inheriting all the passions of the man with the modesty of the woman; waiting, praying for the good to dominate. To an anæmic, negative woman, such an emotion is unknown; I am speaking of the normal type of woman, the woman palpitating with enthusiasm and life. There is much cheap affectation about the physical side of one’s nature, much hypocritical denial of the sensuous. We should revere the physical and adjust it, not crush it. It should not atrophy and become extinct.

“Zarah,” she said to me vehemently, “I am at least a woman, not a statue! The great number of women who helped to create empires—were they cold, negative women?

No! For the proper development of human nature is never single; a strong mind should be supported by a strong body."

I could understand her perfectly, and I hoped in her life she would never awaken to find everything turned into ashes; no sweet memories, nothing but disappointment, persistent and cruel—to find herself in an apathetic attitude toward life, crushed and discouraged. She was a Latin; I was an Oriental; we loved with our souls, our minds, our bodies; everything subservient to love—love in its most intense and human form. This is not understood by the phlegmatic type of woman, neither is it understood by the superficial woman.

Thoughts of Stella, her very words, still crowded through my mind. I tried to dismiss them and lose myself in the beauties of nature, for the evening was exquisite, the sky tinted with faint lavender and blue; there was no pink or gold, only the soft, misty clouds which seemed to form a canopy hovering directly over the house—so near and personal, full of blessings, messengers of hope and compensation.

Now and then I would catch the heavy odor of a flower closely resembling the perfume of the jessamine or tube-rose, compelling and seductive in the sense of romance and beauty; for who is there who has not some sentiment associated with these flowers? Flowers that are dear to our youthful, happy days when we have spent hours strolling over the green hills in the presence of one whose purity has been symbolized by a rose, the memory of which has been imprinted on our hearts. How closely intermingled is the aesthetic and the sensuous, and how exquisite the union of the two!

Days spent on the roads of soft beauty with our loved one, hours together in the pale shadows and the softness of twilight—nights with that loved one in our arms—or the memory of a terrible yearning. Days and evenings spent together, but the denial of the glorious nights by the cruel hand of Fate, which tortures with the nearness of possession, and then eludes us, leaving only the perfume of the rose. . . .

CHAPTER SEVEN

SEVERAL weeks passed in this quiet existence until a letter from Louis brought some exciting news—that he and Stella had had some quarrel, trifling as he thought, but that she had taken the trouble seriously, and disappeared. It was about a young artist for whom he thought she cared; that she had suddenly broken off their engagement and gone, leaving no clue.

He wrote me most intensely, dramatically, thus:

“My dream is over. Stella is lost to me forever. What will she do? Where has she gone? She is so fearless and daring and so unprotected, there is no telling what course she may pursue—no ties—no conventional sense of morality, nothing to act as a rein upon her actions! My home is now turned

into a silent tomb where dwells the heart of my love. I awaken rebelliously each morning regretting the return of consciousness, only to be tortured by my futile thoughts. I wish to remain in the region where one feels nothing, only the joy of annihilation! Last evening when the shadows deepened into the black night there were no stars, no delicately tinted twilight—only the bleak dreary night pressed upon the last remnant of the day, bringing a fitting environment to my weary heart, where the elements of nature preserved an atmosphere which did not taunt me with brightness and reminiscence. Brightness and color at such times only deepen our sorrows by contrast. I am exhausted, my life meaningless—only half a man so to speak, struggling with a grey existence. This morning I am spending in the sunshine which taunts me—the sun only plays with me, only touches lightly a body which is unresponsive and exhausted. The idea of suicide to me has never appeared insane. The very physical act seems a daring thing. I believe that many sane men soberly analyze their condition and decide to take

their lives simply because they do not care to play the game any longer, and not because of any insane or cowardly thought."

His letter continued in this manner.

As I held the paper in my hand it seemed for a moment that his sorrow was entirely mine. In a few moments the almost joyful thought that Stella had gone obsessed me, and for hours and days I seemed suddenly lifted up into a bright, new realm of happiness and hope. . . .

Many days passed after I heard this news. I hoped for another letter from Louis, but he seemed to have forgotten me—everything and everyone except Stella—and I was filled with suspense and longing.

A damp, rainy night added to my sorrow. It was late; I sat in the darkness, gazing into the log fire and, after sitting thus for several hours, I decided to light the candle and read. The sound of the wind playing around the house, whistling in an awful minor tone, resulted in a moan; the desolation, the loneliness, the blackness of the night brought keenly to my mind the realization of my loneliness.

I sat musing, leaning upon the table where the candle burned slowly, throwing weird shadows over the room, creating different shades of gray and black, corresponding with the bleakness of the night. The fire was dying in the hearth, symbolic of my state of heart where everything was turning into ashes, with only a memory of futile hopes.

As I glanced down at the last ray of the dying fire I caught the outline of a shadow, a figure which seemed to come from the window opening upon the porch. I looked again—saw nothing. Believing it to be the phantasy of a fevered brain, I gave it no further thought, and, blowing out the candle, walked toward the fire to gaze into the last bit of warmth in my room. Instinctively I looked toward the window where again I caught the glimpse of a shadow. Fearing that it might be some crafty mountaineer, I groped my way to the table, drew out a revolver, loaded it and stood waiting to fire upon the intruder. After a moment the shadow became more distinct. I called;

“Who’s there?”

No answer. I rushed to the window, threw it open and repeated my call. Again no answer. I looked about; there was no one. I called to my servant, Jane; she came, insisting that it was only my imagination, and coaxed me to try to rest.

She left me and I threw myself upon the bed; after a long time I dropped off to sleep. Suddenly I awakened with a start; the wind had subsided, the rain was now a quiet drizzle—all was still. Yet I felt a presence. It was uncanny. *I sensed a human being.* What was it? Was I developing some kind of brain disorder? Was my illness resolving into a nervous collapse, or was there something crouching in the darkness near the window—a something not tangible or alive, something haunting me?

Straining my eyes in an effort to see clearly, I gradually stood up in bed, looking at the window. There, I thought I saw the appearance of the profile of a face pressed against the window pane. Creeping out of bed, my revolver cocked and ready to fire, I suddenly realized that it was the face of a ghost, or the face of some ghastly human

being void of life or expression. Drawing nearer, fearlessly now, I threw the window open. There, staring blankly into space, a shadow of her former self, was Stella Graham!

I called her name; she did not answer, but continued to stare into space. Gently I lifted her upon the window sill, drawing her through the window and placing her upon a chair, where she neither replied nor assented to my questions. She was in a dazed condition. I asked more questions, but she looked straight ahead without answering. Her mind was apparently a blank, her body thin, her face pale and lifeless. Rushing across the room I poured out a glassful of whiskey and fairly thrust it down her throat. She swallowed slowly, mechanically until a coughing spell, induced by the alcohol, took possession of her, bringing light to her eyes and color to her cheeks.

Throwing her head against the back of the chair she began to speak in a feeble, pathetic voice.

“For nights I have been sleepless. I have lived in torture. I have not eaten, I have

not spoken to a human being. I have been distracted with grief. I have been staying with some poor people at the foot of the mountain, thinking that perhaps Louis would come to you. I could see the light from your window and somehow it drew me up here to you.

“There is nothing left for me now. He does not believe in me, but I am innocent. I am not what he believes. I *did* do something very indiscreet, I admit. I did go to the artist’s apartment (I mean Joe) of whom you have heard. First, we went to the theatre. He had long promised to show me his art treasures, and also proof of his hypnotic skill, of which I had often heard him speak. To do this he had said that he required the quiet and power of the night.

“‘At the witching hour,’ he said, which was twelve o’clock, ‘if you will come to my apartment you will see there soft lights flowing through the darkness, and many other things. You will see me put my valet into a hypnotic sleep of no ordinary kind, when he will reveal many hidden and beautiful truths of the celestial world, a world well-

known to the Adepts of the East with whom I have studied.'

"Upon our return from the theatre we entered a dark room in his apartment, and sat silently, solemnly to await the materialization of unseen forces. After sitting for an hour I saw the many strange things, but I found it very difficult to believe in them; then the lights were turned on and Joe proceeded to put his valet into a hypnotic sleep. It was then about two o'clock in the morning, and the man remained in this condition a long time, repeating exquisite Indian lyrics and answering many questions lucidly, even questions I asked concerning people and things about whom he knew nothing. I was completely fascinated and entranced by the wonder of it!

"It was then about daylight—an impossible hour for me to return to my home. Joe suggested waiting until a more suitable hour, and breakfasting there with him. To this I willingly assented. So completely absorbed was I with the wonder of these experiences that all sense of values was lost as to time, place and conventionality, and then

you know that Venus side of my nature which dominates me at times—I loved the novelty of being there, the knowledge of Joe's love for me, the charm of his virile personality, the sensuous beauty of his apartment! There were rose tints with blue and gold, crimson and purple; all the oriental shades blended in perfect harmony; paintings suggesting the art of Titian and Rubens; some gorgeous pieces of Satsuma; an old bust of Buddha, under which an Indian priest knelt holding a burner that sent forth a heavy odor of incense newly burned; some very old candlesticks with huge yellow candles set among ivy leaves and white gardenias!

A bright fire burned in the old-fashioned fire place; there were deep sofas with Persian pillows; foot-stools inches deep in velvet; a small tête-à-tête table arranged exquisitely, upon which were choice fruits and sweets, and just enough good red wine to give a touch of hospitality—and Joe, whom I so enjoyed! Oh, well, who would have gone home? Would *you*, Zarah?"

I did not answer, I was only thinking of some way to help her. I remained speech-

less for a few moments, unable to say anything coherent or worth while, with a realization of the cruel injustice and misunderstanding. We sat facing each other.

"You said it was Joe's valet who was put into a hypnotic sleep?" I added quickly, "Maybe I can help you."

"What!" she exclaimed, and before I could finish my sentence she jumped up and grabbed me by both shoulders.

"Tell me, tell me—what can you do, Zarah? You cannot help, even if you want to, because there is no proof; he will not believe you."

"Yes, I can," I said quietly, "the valet you speak of was Louis' servant for many years. There is proof, you see, my dear; it will be all right, I am sure, for both of you!"

With these words of encouragement she grew more tranquil and the wonderful stillness of the morning seemed to quiet her. Finally her mood changed suddenly from a serious, womanly one to that of a happy child. She ran about the room playfully, making remarks about the place, its coloring,

decorations, etc. She slipped out and called to Jane in a triumphant voice to come—that she wanted to see her. Stella embraced her as she came in, kissing her twice upon both cheeks, and then ran back to me, throwing her arms about me, smiling up into my face—quite like a little girl of seven years.

After a few moments I succeeded in making her listen to my plan. I would go to the neighboring village and telegraph Louis to come to us.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LOUIS wired that he would come immediately, and arrived almost as soon as his telegram.

It was a strange day for me. It all happened so suddenly.

After my explanation Louis decided that Stella and he would be married that afternoon.

Imagine how I felt at this strange touch of Fate—that *I* should have been selected as the one to bring them together again and that they should be married from my home! It seemed too much for human endurance!

Somehow I went about serenely, helping as best I could, finally to realize that the hour had come when I was to witness the ceremony.

By four o'clock in the afternoon Louis had made the trip to the village and returned with the license. The carriage was ready to take us to the church at the foot of the mountain.

The three of us drove down the winding road to the quaint little church. There Louis and Stella were united. They were too happy to realize the formal and wordy benediction—perhaps it seemed unnecessary, for their love had made the union pure and complete.

They were to return to my home for supper, and afterwards take the evening train for New York City.

Most of the drive was spent in silence. They were lost in a deep meditation and reverie of happiness and understanding.

The beauty of the early evening was exquisite. The moon high in the heavens, each star bright yet steady in its dignified setting of repose, white clouds gathering in the distance, manifesting beauty in its most sublime aspect; tall trees whispering messages of hope—each little bird gone to nest with its mate—everything palpitating with peace, that

peace born of mutual longing and expression.

Finally we caught a glimpse of the light from my little home, the lantern again waving a greeting.

The carriage wheels seemed to turn in a sweet rhythm of song; the soft air was charged with blessings; distant camp fires sent out red lights; the faint echo of a man's deep voice singing in a minor key—and then darkness again and silence.

Could they draw nearer to the divine? Were they not with nature in its sweetest form, where they could not escape the inspiration that Nature gives?

Once in awhile I caught a glimpse of Stella's face. I had noticed before that hers was a face with a halo about it; now there was something ineffably fine in it, making one think of spiritual things. The physical was strongly developed in her nature, the mental keenly alert, yet she commanded aesthetic devotion. Lilacs and snow were about her; lilacs expressing the sweetness of spring; snow as a symbol of purity. Yet suddenly there would come, as it were, a dash of crimson and purple in her personality; there was

a *color* always about her, potent and exquisite.

Finally we reached my home and, as we entered, the fire was burning brightly in the hearth; there was no other light in the room except two tall candles on the mantelpiece between baskets of wild flowers, the flowers throwing a soft perfume out into the simple room.

Stella slipped away for a few moments and upon her return was dressed in a beautiful gown of soft tones, a sort of rainbow creation of marvelous beauty. This she had borrowed from *me*. How weirdly strange it seemed that I should have been so intimately associated with the woman who had married the man I loved. It was Karma, Destiny, I suppose. . . .

The gown was long and impressive, with a train of lace hanging from the shoulders, suggesting the richness of mediaeval splendor and patrician style.

Louis stood bewildered in her presence, stunned by the realization of such happiness and possession. It seemed that he wanted to say something, to express his love, yet

realized that words were so meaningless, so harsh in the face of such loveliness. He only continued to gaze into her eyes like an awkward schoolboy frightened by the sublimity of supreme love. Womanlike, she guessed the cause of his silence, and, taking the initiative walked eagerly towards him, fairly throwing herself into his arms, kissing him upon the lips with womanly tenderness and worship. Here was a woman who loved with abandonment in every fibre of her being, and he was the man upon whom such love was lavished!

How unworthy he must have felt, must any real man feel, how thoroughly insignificant. A mere man upon whom the very Gods had smiled!

In the twilight dim shadows began to cluster about us; soft breezes came, bringing the fresh breath of the pine trees; the dead leaves seemed to change into new life; the perfume of a heavy flower sent out its fragrance, and the faint echo of chimes sounded in the distance. We stood together, listening to the call of the night in that silence which is only relatively silent with the call of

Nature and celestial revelation, pressing upon our half-awakened ears, bringing the full-tone *motif* of peace.

I slipped away unnoticed, and as I looked back upon these two lovers I realized how superbly some women can give all to their mate, for the first instinct of a true woman is to *give*. She looked so beautiful as she stood there offering herself, it seemed as though a messenger of peace had kissed her upon the lips, sealing them with permanent holiness, bringing ambassadors of a foreign but beloved country to their side, forever pledging allegiance to their happiness. For a moment there was only the soul expressing itself, triumphant in its beauty; the mental, somewhere in the far distance; the physical completely submerged; and like two white souls of a distant paradise they stood gazing into the depths of each other's eyes. . . .

Quite gradually the mental awakened and asked a question: What about your arms? Those arms made by the infinite to clasp the beloved in an embrace of ecstasy and abandonment, resulting in a Trinity of love, the soul, mind and body?

Eagerly, hungrily he took her in his arms, lost in a rapture exquisite in its sweetness—the *physical is so beautiful when it acts as a medium for the soul.*

CHAPTER NINE

A YEAR has passed. I have had many letters from Louis and Stella asking me to visit them, but I had not the courage.

They, too, had taken a little home in the Adirondacks not far from mine—perhaps *too near*.

I finally determined to go to them for the long promised visit. It seemed to me that nothing mattered any more. I felt no special degree of pain, but everything seemed one long eternity of waiting, *not* for worldly happiness but for spiritual Vision and strength, for something I had learned from my communion with Nature—a steadfast belief in compensation, a belief in the justice of God. *I had learned that there was beauty in consecration, strength in abnegation, revelation in sacrifice.* Perhaps after all, sorrow had brought me *something* beautiful.

There is much talk about the call of the blood. It is true and powerful, but there is a call of the spirit, so fine and potent that every man must bow his head in recognition at its passing. When once this call is registered there is always a longing for this kingdom of things beautiful, to look into those exquisite things of the soul. *The soul is very real*, it is not a fantastic creation of the nervous organism. . . .

I arrived at Stella's home, and found that Stella's Madonna nature had predominated; her dream materialized. Her own child was in her arms; the maternal instinct and call had been answered and she lived in the fullness of love, enduring and complete. Like the strong woman she was there were no petty illnesses, she was well and more splendidly beautiful than before; her complexion softer and more rosy, her eyes full of that spiritual expression which comes only through motherhood; her smile just a bit more tender, and the halo has increased, leaving a deep border of mystic blue about her, I fancied, a light that seemed to encircle her in holiness.

And what a dear old-fashioned mother she was! She cared for her baby herself; she bathed, dressed and rocked it in just the way our grandmothers used to do, ever watchful, patient, and infinitely sweet.

Many times they have planned to take a home in the city, but the thought of the jar, the harshness intruding upon them, bringing the inharmonies of life, makes them stay a little longer in their quiet home. The "now" was too beautifully calm and sweet; they could not bear to lose a moment of such happiness where everything blended in a full chord of steadfast repose.

As for Louis' medicines, they were put aside with disdain, and a few old-fashioned remedies retained, which, in some way, seem to preserve the proper equilibrium.

Her life was that of the normal woman, in whom the first principle is love. There were no worldly desires to destroy the beauty and tranquility of the deeper life, and she not only gave happiness, but lived as an example of true womanhood, making me feel that in service and consecration no desire could be refused. For once in a while Fate

gives us our desires, particularly if they are sweet ones, and I wonder if it is not right to believe that even the angels have their mates—that it is just one beautiful, holy family where God himself smiles down upon all lovers—*and the deeper the love, the sweeter the smile.*

END OF THE FIRST MEMORY

SECOND MEMORY

There are heroes who lie in unvisited tombs.

UNKNOWN.

SECOND MEMORY

It was with reverence and understanding that I knocked on the door of an old-fashioned house in southern Mississippi. I had heard that the place was to be rented for the first time, and when I caught a glimpse of the garden and the dignified, yet quaint, setting of the place, every line and touch marged with tradition, I hesitated many minutes before taking courage to enter, for I realized that I was treading upon sacred ground. I knocked again, and there was silence—only the wind blowing gently in the tree-tops and the soft murmur of the sea answered my call. I knocked again, twice, three times, but again silence. At last the door opened gently and instead of the maid whom I expected to see, there stood a tall, slender girl

in her early twenties, sweet, serene, patriotic. Her deep black eyes held me spellbound, for instantly I recognized a kinswoman in the occult sense of the word—a kindred mentality—a comprehensive soul.

We stared at each other strangely for a second, and then, as though she had suddenly realized my mission, she hastily began to anticipate my thought and said conventionally, "I suppose you have come—to—to—rent the house?" Because of the way she stopped and almost sobbed the words "to—rent—the—house" there came a corresponding note in my voice as I said:

"Yes, to live here and to cherish this beautiful place as you do."

An unconventional answer it was, but when I realized that her heart was breaking at the thought of a stranger, an intruder, daring to possess her home that held so many personal and sacred memories, I could but answer as I did, and as I entered the great hall I fully understood her condition of mind and heart.

First, she led me to the "parlor" as she called it, an old room with the highest ceiling

I had ever seen, all done in white kalsomine, as it was called "before the War." The furniture was rosewood, magnificently carved; there were large windows with green shutters over which hung heavily brocaded curtains that swept the floor; there were some old busts and handsome pieces of bric-a-brac; an old French clock that reached far above the marble mantel, a combination of Dresden china and old gold, covered by a huge canopy of glass.

Slowly she led me through the library that held hundreds of books, and the other rooms, until we came to the east end of the house, where she again spoke as though trying to master a tremendous emotion. "This was *his* room," she said, "it was my father's." A door opened and I stood upon the threshold of a large room with four windows overlooking a beautiful garden, a garden characteristic of the dead sweet South of long ago. There were trees of sweet olive and magnolia, there were palms, ferns and famous old Marshal Neil roses, wisteria, white camelias and red japonicas, and a number of oak trees seeming to reach the sky, through which a

view of the water was to be had where small sail boats were drifting out to sea.

In the room was a four-poster bed that looked as though it must have remained in the same spot for at least three generations. The paintings were hung by wires almost breaking with age; by the bed was a quaint prayer bench, with old china candlesticks, fresh flowers and a rosary made of heavy black beads, the largest imaginable beads with a long carved cross of gold and precious jewels; there was incense, too. Indeed it was a veritable altar in its simple dignity and peace.

After leaving this room we went to the back of the house to a huge gallery; then another garden and orchard, and a path which led to the distant cotton fields. Negro servants were singing in the distance and a faint echo of dogs trailing in the woods. Finally we came to her "retreat" as she called it, a little summer house covered with ivy and jasmine.

By this time the spark of kinship had leaped into flame, for we were talking vividly, personally, as though we had known each

other for years. It was because she, too, had recognized me as a sympathetic friend. We stood during a little chat in this green covered spot.

She was gowned in black with two small bands of white crepe bound tightly around her small wrists; a band at her throat, two tiny black slippers that peeped out from beneath her simple gown; her hair was black, her eyes seemed even more black; her complexion was colorless, which made her red lips stand out in intense contrast, showing to advantage her aquiline features.

It was interesting to watch the struggle between her Objective or conventional mind with her Subjective or soul mind. She wanted to be herself, yet realized what a short friendship ours was; but after a few words of encouragement and sympathetic interest from me she began talking in a monologue, rarely looking at me but rather down to the sea, wistfully, pensively, as though thinking aloud.

"I am glad you like the place; I am glad that you will have it," she began. "I think you will understand my love for it—and how

it tears my heart to give it up to a stranger. It has been ours for three generations; I have been so happy here—but most of all *he* loved it, and *he died* here. I mean my father,” she added hastily.

“I understand,” I said, “for I, too, loved a father—just a father—a love so few can understand. The idle love for a sweetheart is understood, the love of a child, a dog, anything,” I added intensely, “but somehow the love of a parent is placed usually upon a prosaic basis, a casual, negative, plane of mere affection, rather than that of profound love.”

As I said this she got up suddenly yet prettily and dramatically, coming over and seating herself directly beside me.

“I want to be *near* you,” she said. “I want to be *close* to anyone who feels the same as I do about fathers. Let me sit by you—I have never before known anyone who seemed to understand.”

“Tell me, my dear, tell me everything,” I said. “Why should two gentlewomen wait for a conventional length of time before we turn to personalities? Surely we can afford

to be natural? Perhaps the telling will help you; perhaps I can give you some small comfort."

"Yes, I will tell you," she said impulsively, like a starved, lonely child. "I will tell you everything. First I shall describe him to you.

"My earliest recollection of him was as he stood in that doorway superbly dignified, bowing in his stately manner as he went forward to greet his guests, or perhaps some one of us as we entered, with never the slightest demonstration of his great heart, but with a smile that was a benediction in its simple sweetness, a smile that bore more tears than happiness, a smile that seemed to hold one in its deep sadness, yet gentle patience. My mother died when I was a baby and his heart broke then, for hearts *do* break, you know!

"There would be a formal yet lovely dinner (everything was formal, we were always 'at court' as it were), the Major, as he was called, having been on a leave of absence was our guest of honor.

"I remember the promenade to the dining-

room through that long winding hall where we walked in couples, even the children, with our negro mammy at our heels; I can now quite recall the roasted turkeys, red wines and all kinds of wonderful dishes served on silver platters with flowers all around everything; Venetian glass, wax candles and faultless service. After dinner I would catch strains from his violin, and just as I dropped off to sleep I could hear passages from 'Annie Laurie,' 'Old Black Joe' and 'Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground.'

"Then the usual thing happened in the life of a child; the time soon passed and I was sent away to school. After a few years in Paris I returned to my old home, and what a rejoicing! The servants were assembled at the gate, there was music and dancing, and joy in its height. I ran singing through the house like a child, I was so glad to be *home* again! It was lonely and dull to be sure, but *he* was there, 'Papa,' as I called him. But when I went singing through the house I detected a false note, for, in spite of the joy and mirth there was an undercurrent of sadness and there was unspeakable sadness in

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the Major's face. He looked so handsome and well (he had always been well), but yet there was something I could not define. The evening dragged on and passed.

"The next morning the doctor arrived hurriedly and asked to see me alone. He brought me here to this spot and told me that my father had heart trouble and could only live a few months—that I alone might prolong his life. 'Do not let him know you have learned that he is ill; sing, laugh, dance and be merry, and you may keep him a little longer with you.'

"The world stopped for me then. I felt too deeply to cry out. I was dazed. I was bewildered. I seemed to go about in a dream until I realized that I must begin the fight against death. Then the weeks of agony that followed—the subsequent suspense, the strain of it all was unbearable and without avail. During Christmas, after the most hideous suffering, the most cruel agony of pain, one night sitting in his chair (for he could not lie down) he lifted up his dear arms toward me and died. . . .

"I was like a faithful dog who had lost its

master; I wanted to creep off in a corner and die, but I could not. I was helpless. I was prostrated by grief. And then, a superman was dead. A man so physically beautiful that the Greek gods themselves might have envied him. A man so royal in bearing that Cæsar might have felt insignificant and a soul as tender as a young mother's. This was the estimate placed upon him by priest, prince and peasant.

“When this great soul went out into the darkness, the silence, there was a fitting setting for his departure. The rain poured in torrents as though the skies themselves must weep. The wind blew ruthlessly, as though the elements resented his leaving. Lightning tore the sky; the thunder pealed forth in deep groans of rebellion; the candles burned unsteadily, throwing weird shadows over the room where he lay for the last time, and fresh flowers withdrew their perfume and folded their leaves in despair.

“The night wore on—on to the gray dawn of a winter day—a day that became a monstrous fiend because its hours were to embrace the last rites of the magnificent dead!

"As the sun sank into the infinite arms of an everlasting grief I heard from my window the solemn strains of Gounod and Liszt. Some thoughtful soul had arranged this kind of music, eliminating the commonplace, for orthodoxy to him seemed limited; his God was that of Emerson and Tagore, the God of universal love, of open mind and imperishable soul.

"There was no wordy benediction, only a few deep prayers, a clod of earth reverberating as it fell upon the black coffin, sending forth an echo of pain—silence—a tear—and a flower—the cry of a child in the distance—a sob from an old servant—the sun casting its rays upon the newly opened ground. Then a turning away, a glimpse of bent figures as they retraced their steps going forth into dusk, the wind whistling in a minor key through the tall trees, and then the awful stillness which brands itself upon the soul and the words of Shorthouse ringing in my tortured brain: 'The injustice of life and the silence of God!'

"Even the green things about at least had hope, for when they awakened on a dark and

dreary morning to find the sun not there for a day, with the hateful rain drops falling from the angry sky, they had at least the *promise of another day*, while I had nothing.

“Weeks, months and years have passed, and still the ever present longing—memories that refuse to die torture me—the crying out for sight and touch—the persistent effort to penetrate the barrier, to pass the dwellers upon the threshold and enter into the Celestial Empire; the desire to push aside laws governing matter; to reach the subtle realms of spirit, keep my soul in nightly pilgrimages—in dreams and visitations—ever calling his name. I daily searched for someone with a similar grief but found no one to understand it. Like the woman who takes a lantern and looks into the face of each pilgrim trying to find her lover, so it was that I tried to find a friend who could understand, only to receive a stare or an empty word of advice. So, wearily I put down my lantern and waited in the black night and in waiting I heard an acquaintance saying, ‘What is her grief, a great one, lover, husband dead?’

'No,' was the reply of a so-called friend—'it's nothing much—*just a father.*'

"Sadly I recoiled in horror at these light words, withdrew from the world of action and wandered into the all-enduring world of nature, of green fields, blue skies and tranquil repose; straining my ears to catch the melodies of soft mornings and silent nights—yet always with those words branded upon my heart, '*Just a Father.*' "

END OF THE SECOND MEMORY



THIRD MEMORY

*We talk of love as an emotion when
we ought to recognize it as a prin-
ciple that underlies the universe.*

CHARLES B. NEWCOMB.

THIRD MEMORY

It was England. I sat at the window of my room and gazed into the harbor for the first time in many days. I had been ill, perhaps more miserably bored and worried than ill. I sat there at five in the morning watching the sea. In the distance was a quaint windmill, a fishing settlement and a lighthouse, where a Mahatma or wise man of the East lived. I felt a genuine longing for something simple and sincere, and having heard that the Mahatma was a fine student and lived the life of a recluse and that his philosophy was happiness, I was anxious to meet such a unique character who could live in a lonely lighthouse and yet teach happiness.

I had two hours to wait for my boat, and as I sat there watching the fishing and sail

boats putting out to sea and the brown skinned boys taking their morning swim, I determined to meet this Wise Man.

The shades this morning were more varied than I had ever seen them, and the sky was tinted in the most delicate pastel shades. There was more lilac and a faint shade of green to be seen than the usual soft blue and rose, with a most exquisite border of vivid gold forming a circle immediately around these colors, finished off with a clear, almost crisp, cloud of silver that deepened into the mystic grey. It was so intense and silent I felt the desire for action, for spiritual expression, a sort of leaning toward the eternal. My best means of reaching this seemed to be through my possible acquaintanceship with this man from the East. I meant to know him; I jumped into my boat with eager impatience and rowed toward the lighthouse. After much rowing and persistent effort, I reached the lonely spot where dwelt this lonelier soul. After a silent greeting, for he only looked at me in that Oriental way, a looking deep down into the soul as it were, he said: "Come in, my dear." This "my

dear" was said with true kindness and benevolent interest, and his greeting somehow made me feel that I had met a friend, as well as a priest.

He took me to his study, as he called it, where he showed me some very old and rare books, such as one really never sees in shops and libraries, a rare bust of the Buddha, some strangely pressed flowers, a few herbs from which he made his own medicines, a queer little organ and a black rosary with a heavily carved cross of very yellow gold hanging over the face of Christ. This seemed an inconsistency. It seemed strange to find this in the room of an Indian, who, as I supposed, was indifferent or even prejudiced to our beloved Nazarene. I could not conceal my curiosity, and with the keen intuition of the East, the Mahatma said to me:

"Do you think it strange to find your Christ here with our Buddha? Do you not know that as a lover of Divine Wisdom that the first principle or fundamental object in our fraternity is to reconcile all religions, sects and nations under a common system of ethics, based on 'eternal verities'? Do you not

know that this is our sincere desire, the *realization* of the 'brotherhood of man'? There is a mighty triad acting on and through ethics composed of Buddha, Confucius and Christ. The first, a Hindu, founds a religion which to-day embraces many more people than Christianity, teaching centuries before Christ the same ethics which He taught. Christ repeats these ancient ethics, and Confucius does the same for ancient China.

"These great names represent members of one single Brotherhood who all have a single doctrine. They have identical principles and aim at identical ends. This is not my theory, it is a historical fact. You have only to read and you will find it so."

"But why do you come so far away from your beloved India, may I ask?" There was more interest than curiosity in my question.

A wave of sadness, indescribable sadness, passed over his face, and he said in his slow, measured voice: "That is a long and unhappy story, but since we are to be friends, and *you*, I hope, are to be my pupil, I will tell you.

"Ten years ago I married a beautiful Rajpootni, I myself being the son of a king. She

was my Lotus Bud, my little Aranyani. One year she lived, just long enough to place a little boy in my arms, to whom we gave the name of Atirupa, because of his strange and wonderful beauty that resembled his mother Aranyani, which translated means, a forest goddess or nymph. He was so like her in his love of the woods. All day long my little one, my little friend, as I called him, wandered by the sea and back to the woods. We were inseparable. So much so that it seemed that, as young as he was, he must have felt my grief as keenly as I felt his joy.

“There was a splendid mutual understanding, the kind that was so silent yet subtle, that our hearts were one. It was a real joy to see him playing in the woods at dusk with the ‘tamala’ shadows falling upon him and the great trees waving their branches over his playground where he found the red fruits and ‘gunja’ berries that he loved so well. He spent hours rolling over in the tall grass until he fell asleep from the very joy and beauty of these sweet pleasures, and all this time I sat mutely watching his play, dreaming of his mother, my Digit of the Moon, my

sweet Lotus Bud, who had passed so swiftly out of my arms.

“My little Atirupa was all I had left. He was now seven, with a peculiarly precocious mind and strongly developed body. Often we played in the sands and in the blue water, and at night we had supper alone together. We read little boys’ stories until bedtime, when we both went to bed like two tired children. He had the true spirit of adventure. He was fearless and investigating and our days were full of excitement, in spite of our isolation.

“One evening he asked to go swimming with some big boys whom we knew. I consented and they were off with the glee and fresh joyousness that only young boys can feel. I watched them in the distance, my own heart reflecting their sweet joy, feeling the glad thankfulness that comes only to those who have great love and understanding of little joys. I sat in the dusk thinking of the past, of its seeming cruelty, its torturing lessons of sorrow, its long-wearying memories that refused to die. Yet still in my heart there was a great thankfulness, a deep gratitude

for this one precious gift, this one source of joy and human companionship, my little boy. When I heard a shout from the beach. I saw nothing but I heard one onlooker say: 'There is something in the water, something in the water.' Then my mind seemed paralyzed. I stood speechless, motionless, repeating insanely: 'There is — something — in — the — water!'

"The words sounded thousands of miles away and yet I felt nothing. I was petrified with grief; for I saw them lifting a little cold, wet body out of the sea, its mass of black hair all matted in lovely curls upon the calm sweet forehead. They laid him down in the sand. They worked skilfully over him, but it was too late. That little soul had sailed away in the little 'blue boat' of which we had been singing in the morning, sailed to a Heaven where there are always blue boats and morning songs for little children who see God, and where they remain as sweet symbols of the all-enduring love of eternity.

"They brought me my little one and I gathered him in my arms and walked back to our home which would never be home again.

I sent the others away; bathed his dear body and kissed his beautiful hair. I thanked Heaven that I had ever been tender and gentle with him. I put the blue boat in his helpless little hands, a cross at his head and the wild flowers we had gathered together at his feet, then I went out into the awful silence—that terrible silence which speaks nothing to us at such a time, even if we be lovers of God.

“I watched the silent stars creep into their snowy beds. I saw the moon fade away into clouds of despair; I heard the little breezes in the tall trees, moaning for my little one with the eyes so sweet and voice so tender and then I could bear no more. I ran down towards the sea to lose myself, my sorrow in the bliss of annihilation, when something suddenly stopped me. It was something almost tangible, something very quiet and very sweet. It said ‘He lives, he is marching to little soldier tunes in the mystic blue, and he has his blue boat and his mother, too.’ Then something, a far-reaching, all abiding peace took possession of my soul. I felt calmed, strong and resigned, only I couldn’t go back.

I couldn't go back into that house again. I sent for my friends, the neighbors. I watched them take him to the churchyard beyond the Temple gate where they laid him down to sleep in flowers, that sleep which little children love so well, and I came away—far away—into a new country, for home was strange to me then; so I stay here keeping the light, guiding the path of the ships, always praying for the safety and happiness of those I guide, and especially if there be any little boys who love wild flowers and who sail in 'blue boats' upon the sea.

"So now you may know why I am contented here. Why I choose to be alone. The world can hold nothing for me now; but you are young. You have work to do in the world. Go back to it, and remember my words to you. May I give you some advice? You have heard that I have lived through much unhappiness, yet somehow I still believe in happiness. It is my creed. I wish that *you* may be happy. Follow me while I give you some advice, a philosophy that I wish you to remember. If I say too much you must forgive me. But I love this subject of life, of

the individual in his relationship to nature, to happiness, to clear thinking and fine living; for there is a practical value in happiness. Listen and I will give you my thoughts. . . .

“The Puritan idea of sacrifice and abnegation was a distorted conception of Christianity. It was carried to unhealthy extremes and the results were usually futile. Sacrifice can only be noble when it is intelligently directed for a purpose and to a normal end. Sackcloth and ashes have doubtless crushed more souls than they ever developed. On the other hand, happiness is such a wonderful and beautiful thing, can it be other than the normal and right means of development? All nature is so beautiful and happy, that it would seem that happiness is the High-Priestess of God’s desire.

“When we have lost the soul we love most, never to behold in the beauty of the physical again, our hearts turn to stone. We move in the world’s arena as bewildered, frightened children, groping for new faculties so that we may learn to dwell with the spirit of misery, yet realizing that the only respite

from our own unhappiness is the effort to make others happy.

"We behold poor, struggling humanity tied by physical faculties and desires which insist upon expression, which seem to possess and overpower. Heredity and environment often combine against pilgrimage toward the Infinite, and the struggle seems both futile and inhuman. We are tossed upon an ocean of hostile forces, too strong for a fair battle. Seeing this struggle, those who understand its value long to see happiness lighting the way, strengthening and sustaining, giving nourishment to those who famish for a torch-bearer in the night so dark and dreary."

I left with his words imprinted upon my heart and his last words I can never forget, and neither can I forget *him*.

"Go in peace," he said, "love Nature with all your heart and with all your mind. Love everything that is beautiful; in loving the beautiful you love God. It is not a means to an end, this love of beauty, for it *is* the end. There is nothing beyond. It is not a road that leads to the Infinite, for it *is* the Infinite. The greatest lover is the greatest artist—he

is the great revealer, for he has felt the highest principle of creation—*love*.”

THE END

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